

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Public Hearing

February 19, 2015

Written testimony of State Ombudsman, Nancy Shaffer

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and esteemed members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Nancy Shaffer and I am the Connecticut State Long-Term Care Ombudsman. Per the Older American's Act and CT General Statute 17b-400-417, it is the duty of the State Ombudsman to provide services to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of the residents of skilled nursing facilities, residential care homes and managed residential communities/assisted living facilities. Most recently, the CT General Assembly mandated the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program develop a pilot project to provide community ombudsman assistance to individuals in Hartford County. It is the responsibility of the State Ombudsman to also advocate for changes in laws and governmental policies and actions that pertain to the health, safety, welfare and rights of residents with respect to the adequacy of long-term care facilities. In my capacity as co-chairperson of the Connecticut Elder Justice Coalition I have broadened my understanding of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation specific to vulnerable individuals who reside in their communities. In my work with the Connecticut Elder Justice Coalition I've had the opportunity to meet with state and national experts and learn from them. I bring this perspective to my testimony regarding:

S.B. No. 896 (Raised), AN ACT CONCERNING PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR SUSPECTED ELDERLY ABUSE VICTIMS

It is important that the State take a leadership role in effective protections for frail aging individuals, especially at a time when our aging demographics speak so dramatically to the great numbers of people over the age of 65 who now and into the future will reside in Connecticut. The Ombudsman Program appreciates the proponents thoughtful clarification of definitions included in this proposal as well as the professional intent of the proposal to provide improved protections for elders.

Research from the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA), University of California, Irvine, suggests that 1 in 10 Americans age 60+ experienced abuse over one year, and many experienced it in

